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Atari Online News, Etc.
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~ NSA Installed Malware! ~ People Are Talking! ~ Hatari 2.0 Close!
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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First off, let me aplologize for there being no issue last week. There were a number of reasons including it being a slow week for articles, some pressing family issues, and the fact that Windows decided that an "important" update needed automatic installation that took about two hours - right in the middle of my working on the issue! So, I was kinda stuck!

So, how about those presidential debates?!?! Yep, let's just keep attacking one another - that's the American political system at its finest! True, Trump isn't your typical Washington politician; that is partly what I like about him. Hillary is more than your typical Washington politician - much worse, in my opinion - one of the things I don't like about her. Yes, The Donald could use a refresher course on tact, but I'll give him some credit for saying it like it is. And Hillary has certainly tried very hard to keep attacking!

Will Hillary be able to shake her e-mail problems? Will she be able to keep dodging her failings as Secretary of State? Will Donald be able to win over more minorities? This latest barrage of attacks by women is certainly planned and politically-motivated by either Clinton and/or her supporters (great timing, eh?); will Trump be able to get through that? So many questions, so little time!

Until next time...

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Hatari Beta To Test for Windows

Hi,

In order to prepare next release, I uploaded some beta binaries for windows. As for previous releases, there's a version for 32 bit (windows xp) and more recent 64 bit windows.

http://download.tuxfamily.org/hatari/test_2.0.0/

hatari-2.0.0_windows64.zip
hatari-2.0.0_windows.zip

For people using windows, could you try those binaries ? I tested the 32 bit version, but as I don’t have a 64 bit windows, I would be interested in feedback too (ie does Hatari starts)

Hatari 2.0

By Francois Le Coat

Hi,

Do you know that 2.0 version of Hatari is nearly out? A test release is

<http://download.tuxfamily.org/hatari/test_2.0.0/> here

Hatari is an ATARI ST and STE emulator running under GNU/Linux, BSD, BeOS, Mac OS X and many other systems supporting the SDL libraries, and is based on WinSTon sources.

Source : emu-france.com

I’ve made a video demonstration, running Eureka 2.12 on the emulator

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtjPa--6IZQ>

Well it’s a Macintosh emulating a Falcon030 ... I don’t have Windows neither an ATARI ST(E) computer. With Hatari 2.0 I can even emulate DSP and FPU of the Falcon030 with my quad-core iMac. It runs pretty fast :-)

Thanks to the Hatari developers team !

Best regards,

--
François LE COAT
Author of Eureka 2.12 (2D Graph Describer, 3D Modeller)
http://eureka.atari.org/

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - PS VR Will Sell ’Hundreds of Thousands’ at Launch!
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Bushnell Launches Modal VR!
Nintendo Unveils Nintendo Switch!
And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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PlayStation VR Will Sell 'Hundreds of Thousands' of Units at Launch, Exec Says

PlayStation VR, Sony's new virtual-reality headset, launched this week. According to PlayStation executive Jim Ryan, Sony is expecting to sell "hundreds of thousands" of units at launch. Additionally, the executive confirmed in the interview with CNBC that Sony is ramping up production.

Another PlayStation executive, Andrew House, previously said that there might be PlayStation VR shortages. Yet another executive, Shuhei Yoshida, said Sony does not know what demand will be for PlayStation VR, in part because it's such a new technology.

Though preorder units sold through quickly, PlayStation VR is available and in stock at Amazon, GameStop and Best Buy right now.

According to research group Superdata, PlayStation VR sales could reach 2.6 million units by the end of the year. The headset costs $400 on its own and also requires a PlayStation 4 and a PlayStation camera.

A $500 PlayStation VR Launch Bundle comes with the headset, a camera, and two Move controllers, as well as the five-game PlayStation VR Worlds collection. All versions of PlayStation VR include a demo disc containing trials for 18 games, including Resident Evil 7.

Priced at $400, PlayStation VR is "extremely affordable," Ryan said, adding that Sony believes "the take-up is going to be massive."

"We know that the replenishment cycle is a good one, production is going exactly as we anticipated. We have made decisions to further increase capacity at the back end of 2016 and into 2017, so there are going to be a lot of PlayStation VRs around the world, whether that's enough to satisfy the demands of the market, we'll see."

GameSpot's Jimmy Thang reviewed PlayStation VR, saying it's not a must-buy at the moment.

"As a VR fan, I want PSVR to succeed, but it trips up too many times to wholeheartedly recommend at this point," he wrote. "Many of the launch titles will make a large percentage of people sick, and it may lead to the false impression that VR has to make you nauseated. If you have a PS4 and are dying to get PSVR, then I'd recommend the $499.99 bundle which includes the

PlayStation Camera, two Move controllers, and PlayStation VR Worlds.

"If you have a PS4 and are simply curious about VR, I'd hold out until more titles are released. While there are a handful of fun titles, there's nothing that I've played at launch so far to indicate to me that the PSVR is a must-buy right now. For everyone else, I'd recommend saving up for a better reality."

Battlefield 1 Release Date: Here's Exactly When You Can Start Playing

If you're not already playing Battlefield 1, you might be soon. The game's rollout has been somewhat unique, as a portion of the game is playable now, the full game will unlock tomorrow, still days ahead of its release date. To help make sense of the situation, here's an explanation of what's available and when.

The World War I shooter from Battlefield series developer DICE officially launches on October 21. However, the game's Play First Trial - which contains a limited selection of the game's single-player and multiplayer content - launched back on October 13 for EA/Origin Access subscribers.

EA Access is available on Xbox One and Origin Access is the subscription service's PC version. No version of EA Access is available on PlayStation 4. However, people who buy the $80 Early Enlister Edition of Battlefield 1 can start playing the full game tomorrow, October 18. Like the full game next week, the Early Enlister Edition unlocks at midnight. This premium version of Battlefield 1, which also comes with extra digital content, is available on PS4, Xbox One, and PC.

The ongoing Play First Trial version of Battlefield 1 contains five maps and four modes for multiplayer, along with the single-player missions Storm of Steel and Through Mud and Blood. When the Early Enlister Edition comes out tomorrow, the remaining multiplayer maps and modes will be available for Play First Trial members. However, that early access period is limited to 10 hours, so if you've reached the limit by October 18, you'll need to buy the game to play those new maps and modes.

EA/Origin Access members save 10 percent on all digital content, knocking down the base game to $54, the Early Edition Edition to $72, and the Ultimate edition to $117. The Ultimate Edition is the only version of the game to include its $50 premium pass, which comes with four expansion packs. Additionally, premium pass-owners will have access to DLC maps two weeks before people who buy it standalone, just like how it works with Star Wars Battlefront.

Battlefield 1's first DLC map is called Giant's Shadow. It's free for everyone and comes out in December. The game's first premium pass expansion, They Shall Not Pass, comes out in March 2017.

Nintendo Unveils The Nintendo Switch, A Hybrid Console/handheld System

Nintendo has officially revealed its next console.

Goodbye NX, hello Switch.

On Thursday, Nintendo lifted the curtain on its next gaming system, and as promised by countless reports, it looks to combine the company s in-home and portable console businesses into one machine.

Due out in March 2017, the newly minted Nintendo Switch mashes together a tablet, handheld and home console into a single device. Here s the full reveal trailer:

The small system functions in two distinct ways. At home, it rests in a dock that connects to your TV like a traditional home console. Players can also lift the device out of the dock, revealing a tablet with a built-in screen that s reminiscent of the Wii U s Gamepad controller. They can then take that tablet out and about and continue playing their game.

Nintendo Switch allows gamers the freedom to play however they like, Nintendo of America president Reggie Fils-Aime said in a press release. It gives game developers new abilities to bring their creative visions to life by opening up the concept of gaming without boundaries.

While players will be able to use a conventional gamepad at home, on the road, they can detach two joysticks Nintendo calls them Joy-Con controllers built into either side of the tablet. Continuing Nintendo s handheld tradition, the Switch will use cartridges.

Missing from the trailer was any information about the Switch s internal specs, although hardware manufacturer NVIDA confirmed in a separate blog post that it will be powered by a custom version of the company s Tegra processor.

The debut trailer features a number of games including Switch takes on homegrown franchises like Super Mario and Splatoon, as well as big third-party console games like NBA 2K and Skyrim. That s likely meant as a pre-emptive strike against the long-held criticism that Nintendo systems lack third-party support. To that end, the company also released a lengthy list of third-parties already on board, including heavyweights like EA, Activision, Bethesda and Take 2 Interactive.

Some big questions remain. How long does that battery last? What s the online situation? And are those two tiny controllers made for human- or Donald-sized hands? We ll undoubtedly learn more in the coming months. In the meantime, watch that trailer again!

Sony Launches PlayStation Tournaments Feature

on PS4, Starts With NBA 2K17

Partnering with eSports company ESL, Sony has launched a new tournaments feature on PlayStation 4 today. With PlayStation Tournaments on PS4, you ll be able to find and participate in competitions organized by ESL, using the PlayStation App or ESL Play to take advantage of interaction features such as Check-in.

The first Major Tournament in North America will come to NBA 2K17, running from October 27 to November 26, with Major Cup rounds every Saturday. The top three winners of the tournament will receive a prize pack that includes a DualShock 4, PlayStation gear, and more. In the future, Mortal Kombat X, Project CARS, and more games will receive tournaments.

European PS4 owners can currently register for FIFA 17, NBA 2K17, WRC 5, and Project CARS tournaments, with Tricky Towers and Tumblestone tournaments to come.

In order to participate in PlayStation Tournaments, you ll need a copy of the game, a PlayStation Plus membership, and a linked ESL account (you ll be prompted to make one if you don t already have one). Tournaments will only support 1v1 matches to begin with, but Sony is working to increase the number for the future.

Sony adds:

> Once tournaments are live, you can find them under Events on your PS4 system menu to view the details. Once you have signed up for a tournament, your PS4 will automatically prompt you when it is time to play your matches. There are many types of Tournaments and matches taking place, so check out the PlayStation Tournaments feature and compete!

ESL s Marcel Menge says:

> We re incredibly excited to be able to offer this seamlessly integrated solution for the most passionate eSports fans. ESL s mission is to bring competitive gaming to fans around the world, and when doing so, to create an environment that allows them to fully focus on their gaming skills. In the partnership with Sony Interactive Entertainment, we re going to host hundreds of weekly tournaments for players from any corner of the world. Anyone who wants to try their hand at competitive gaming, can now easily do so across a wide variety of titles.

Will you be participating in tournaments?

’Doom’ Unleashes Hell With A New Arcade Mode

If you’ve shotgunned and boot-stomped your way through the new Doom campaign (and if you haven’t yet, you should) fear not: Bethesda has plenty more demon hunting ready to go. The developer released "Free Update 4" this week, which comes with a nifty arcade mode. Every gun, suit and "Rune" upgrade is unlocked from the start, giving you the best possible edge in

the battlefield. The aim is to blitz through the "streamlined" game in the shortest time possible, avoiding enemy attacks and racking up multipliers. Points are rewarded for butt-kicking your opponents, leading to a final score that you can compare with friends.

If you miss the original Doom experience, you'll want to dive back into SnapMap. The level editor has been updated with some classic Doom assets - walls, floor panels, computer banks and more - which you can stitch together into devious, ramshackle stages. They won't change the core gameplay, but if you liked the retro Easter eggs baked into the main campaign, this is a way to feed those retro cravings once again. And if you're not particularly creative, that's okay, because you can download other people's maps, or a selection put together by the Doom team.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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The Creator of Atari Has Launched A New VR company Called Modal VR

So Nolan Bushnell, the founder of Atari and Chuck E. Cheese, is launching a new virtual reality company called Modal VR, along with Jason Crawford (who invented the Modal tech and serves as the company s chief executive) and that s super cool.

But (more importantly to me) I played human Pong in virtual reality at the Machinima studios using Modal s gear and that was goddamn amazing.

Machinima is going to be rolling out some features where their folks are going to be using Modal s equipment and putting the gear through its paces. Y all should watch for that stuff when it comes out, because (judging by the experience I had playing games on the site) it s going to be pretty wonderful.

Modal views itself as a hardware and software company providing really high end, completely immersive, virtual reality experiences. In an interview, Crawford was pretty reluctant to talk about the specifics of the company s tech (it s proprietary), but I ve seen it in action, and was suitably impressed.

Using standing sensors that follow and record movement throughout a room, and a full-body tracking suit, Modal has created a completely wireless VR platform that can work with multiple users in areas up to 900,000 square feet and tracks a body with under 10 milliseconds of latency.

If you re having visions of VR arcades dancing in your head right

now, you re absolutely right. That s just the kind of thing that Modal was built for.

But Crawford and Bushnell have bigger game in mind.

The two envision Modal as a one-stop-shop for virtual reality needs. They see their company as providing an app store for VR developers who want to work with the Modal system, and create applications for the businesses that will buy Modal s gear.

Yup, Modal s wireless systems aren t for everyone. Crawford told me he doesn t have any plans for this to be a consumer product. Neither he nor Bushnell have determined a price point for the system, which is still very much a prototype, but it s not going to be cheap enough for the average gamer.

That doesn t mean that consumers won t be able to get their hands on the equipment. It just means they won t own it.

The vision goes back to Bushnell s early days as a pioneer of video games in the first place. Essentially, Chuck E. Cheese was a vehicle for kids who didn t own gaming systems to go somewhere and play the games. And that s one of the ways Modal s business will probably work too.

Based in Los Angeles, Modal s story begins with a very intentional meeting between Crawford and Bushnell three years ago on the set of a show Crawford was trying to get greenlit called App Wars .

A longtime app developer, Crawford was also a huge fan of Bushnell s work (although really who isn t? He s the freaking inventor of Atari).

 Most normal kids were fans of baseball stars or music stars, but my brother and I were nerds and our heroes were Nolan Bushnell and Steve Wozniak, Crawford told me.

So when he had the opportunity to set up a panel of judges for an app-development game show, he insisted that Bushnell be among them.

The pilot didn t get picked up, but Crawford sought out Bushnell and pitched him on his idea for a new virtual reality company.

Three years ago, in the time before the Oculus Rift acquisition, the VR landscape was still very much in flux, and while Crawford had an idea, his company didn t yet have the hardware nailed down. Bushnell agreed to advise, consult, and eventually came on board as co-founder.

 We were going to do a thirty-minute lunch and it was a two-and-a-half hour lunch, Crawford says of that initial meeting.

Bushnell joined about a year ago, but Crawford and his team had been banging away at the technology for much longer. We failed miserably in a lot of ways for years, doing this, says Crawford.

The company chief executive actually began working on Modal s

tech almost as soon as he saw the Oculus Rift Kickstarter campaign. I said, Wait a second. This is the perfect time to come back to VR. I think this is going to be huge and I want to be a part of it.

The company initially started out with Crawford s idea for a destination. It was going to be a place where you going to be able to fully immerse yourself, he said.

At the Machinima studios, that s exactly what I saw. The back room was kind of a skunkworks area for most of the Machinima staff, who hadn t seen what the company was up to. In a roughly 3,000 square foot room, staff had been playing Pong using Modal s technology against each other.

When I walked in, two players were scampering side-to-side in the empty space, while a television monitor showed the action in VR. Both players ran nearly the width of the room to get at the virtual ball they were volleying back and forth.

 We have been working to bring ambitious mixed reality content to our fans and Modal VR is well beyond the limitations we thought possible, said Shaun Novak, senior director of production at Machinima in a statement. The wireless portability, full-body tracking and massive play area really allows for compelling experience in and out of the headset. Modal VR has been a great partner in showing the fun of VR.

The critical component for Modal s technology, according to Crawford, was that it be free-roaming. It had to be wireless so that users could get a fully immersive experience (and it is pretty immersive).

The sensors on the body suit can be a bit tetchy and the system had problems tracking my movements for some of the more complicated experiences where I was manipulating objects in VR with my hands (but it worked great for Pong).

 What a lot of people are trying to do is they re trying to make a system using one technology to power the whole entire thing, says Crawford. Putting them together in the way we have is different. What s most important is how we re doing it and we ve created an end-to-end platform.

Developers can use the hardware, or simply develop applications for Modal and sell them through Modal s own version of an app store. Crawford s seen how tough it is for game developers to make any money (he was one for a long time before starting Modal), so Modal is his way of opening developers up to novel uses for the tech they re working on.

 Instead of making a $3 million app, why don t you think about solving problems for police, he said.

Ideally, app developers can port their skillsets for gaming to start solving problems that businesses have, that virtual reality could help solve, and that could be very lucrative businesses for the entrepreneurs that develop the tools to solve those problems.

Modal intends to make money from the sale of its hardware as well

as taking a cut from the sales of whatever applications are made for its platform.

 It s going to be very similar to an apple ecosystem, says Crawford. Nolan s vision for this is like the Atari 2600 you open the box, you plug it in and you start using it.

The company has already developed a suite of games and tools that show off the capabilities of the system. I mentioned Pong, but perhaps the one that seems the most impressive is its VR battle game called Mythic Combat , which is like a fully realized version of the discus battle game from Tron.

Founder of Atari, Nolan Bushnell, Launches Industrial-Grade Virtual Reality Platform Built For Business - Modal VR

Modal VR, an industrial-grade virtual reality immersion platform built for business launched today. Founded by Nolan Bushnell, founder of Atari and Chuck E. Cheese, and Jason Crawford, inventor and CEO, Modal VR is poised to significantly impact enterprise adoption of virtual reality by offering a complete end-to-end \hardware and software solution based on new immersion technology.

The Modal VR platform combines a radically different hardware system and suite of complimentary software applications to deliver an unprecedented VR ecosystem for enterprise. Modal VR s portable hardware sets up in minutes and provides a completely wireless VR experience featuring fast and accurate full-body tracking for multiple users at once in small or large areas up to 900,000 square feet. Modal VR system owners can easily download and install Modal VR applications, giving way to unlimited possibilities across a myriad of industries. Examples include:

- Themed Entertainment: Interactive attractions and previsualization tools
- Marketing: Experiential activations and social content creation
- Arcades: Large-scale VR experiences including next-gen laser tag
- Entertainment: eSports leagues and mixed reality content
- Real Estate: Previsualization and sales
- Film & TV: Previsualization of sets, stunts and visual effects
- Law Enforcement: Training
- Emergency Response: Training
- Military & Space: Training and operations design
- Education: Virtual field trips and deep immersion learning
- Sports: Real-time game play simulation and analysis
- Museums: Immersive exhibits and virtual walk-throughs
- Municipalities: Urban planning previsualization
- Travel: Virtual destination sampling

Modal VR was born from an independent software studio, so the founders understand the business challenges of most software developers. As a result, the company plans to place Modal VR Developer Editions directly in the hands of developers, providing the community with countless new opportunities for

creating amazing experiences and generating revenue in a new way.

Our team is looking forward to being an active contributor and collaborator within the VR community. We hope Modal VR will help expand our understanding of what is possible and help push the industry forward in different ways, said Jason Crawford, inventor and founder of Modal VR.

Modal VR is helping enterprises solve problems and collaborate differently, said Nolan Bushnell, co-founder and chairman, Modal VR. Modal VR s system and the software that runs on it makes it very different than what s already on the market today.

"We have been working to bring ambitious mixed reality content to our fans and Modal VR is well beyond the limitations we thought possible, said Shaun Novak, senior director of production at Machinima. The wireless portability, full-body tracking and massive play area really allows for compelling experience in and out of the headset. Modal VR has been a great partner in showing the fun of VR.

For more information, to sign up for the developer program, or to inquire about business opportunities, please visit www.modalvr.com.

Based in Los Angeles, California, Modal Systems, Inc. was created by founders Nolan Bushnell (founder of Atari, Chuck E. Cheese, and Etak) and Jason Crawford (founder of Tiny Castle Studios). Modal Systems, Inc. developed Modal VR , a virtual reality platform built for enterprise, that delivers unprecedented freedom and unlimited possibilities.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Cyber Attacks Disrupt PayPal, Twitter, Other Sites

Cyber attacks targeting a little known internet infrastructure company, Dyn, disrupted access to dozens of websites on Friday, preventing some users from accessing PayPal, Twitter and Spotify.

Dyn, whose customers include some of the world’s most widely visited websites, said it did not know who was responsible for the outages that began in the Eastern United States, and then spread to other parts of the country and overseas.

The outages were intermittent, making it difficult to identify all the victims. But technology news site Gizmodo named some five dozen sites that were affected by the attack. They included

CNN, HBO Now, Mashable, the New York Times, People.com, the Wall Street Journal and Yelp.

Dyn said attacks were coming from tens of millions of Internet-connected devices - such as web cams, printers and thermostats - infected with malicious software that turns them into "bots" that can be used in massive distributed denial of service attacks.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security last week issued a warning about this powerful new approach, noting it was concerned about the potential for new attacks after code for malware used in these attacks was published on the internet.

Dyn said late on Friday that it was fighting the third major wave of attacks, which were being launched from locations spread across the globe, making them harder to fight.

"The complexity of the attacks is what s making it very challenging for us," said Dyn s chief strategy officer, Kyle York.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation said they were investigating.

The disruptions come at a time of unprecedented fears about the cyber threat in the United States, where hackers have breached political organizations and election agencies.

Dyn said it had resolved one morning attack, which disrupted operations for about two hours, but disclosed a second a few hours later that was causing further disruptions.

Dyn said early on Friday that the outage was limited to the Eastern United States. Amazon later reported that the issue was affecting users in Western Europe. Twitter and some news sites could not be accessed by some users in London late on Friday evening.

PayPal Holdings Inc said that the outage prevented some customers in "certain regions" from making payments. It apologised to customers for the inconvenience and said that its networks had not been hacked.

Amazon.com Inc’s web services division, one of the world’s biggest cloud computing companies, also reported a related outage, which it said was resolved early Friday afternoon.

Dyn is a Manchester, New Hampshire-based provider of services for managing domain name servers (DNS), which act as switchboards connecting internet traffic. Requests to access sites are transmitted through DNS servers that direct them to computers that host websites.

Dyn said it was still trying to determine how the attack led to the outage but that its first priority was restoring service.

Attacking a large DNS provider can create massive disruptions because such firms are responsible for forwarding large

volumes of internet traffic.

US, UK Cybersecurity Officials: Destructive Hacks Are Coming

The world should brace itself for more physically destructive hacks, two senior cybersecurity officials said Wednesday, warning that a more dangerous era of hacking was already upon us.

Paul Chichester, the director of operations at Britain’s new National Cyber Security Center, told an event hosted by British defense think tank RUSI that electronic intrusions were on their way to becoming more "destructive, disruptive and coercive."

"That will be our future," he told a crowd of officers, academics and industry experts gathered for a two-day symposium in central London.

Chichester was seconded by Air Force Lt. Gen. James K. McLaughlin, deputy commander at U.S. Cyber Command, who told attendees that infrastructure-wrecking attacks were being seen "right now in the environment."

Neither official went into specifics about what they’d seen or why they felt the threat was intensifying, although McLaughlin invoked a cyberattack in Ukraine which knocked out three separate power distribution companies last year. The Dec. 23 incident, believed to have been pulled off by a team of hackers using stolen passwords, left 225,000 people without electricity, according to a U.S. Department of Homeland Security bulletin published two months later.

Cybersecurity experts long worried that hackers can hijack the vulnerable industrial control systems to wreak havoc in power plants, traffic systems, factories, dams or reservoirs. Still, publicly confirmed examples of real-world damage from hacking have so far been few and far between. The Ukrainian incident provided a rare and dramatic demonstration of the physical consequences of a well-organized cyberattack.

McLaughlin said there was now no doubt such hacks were possible.

"Three years ago these were just theoretical," he said. "Now we see them. They’re practically here in front of us."

NSA Installed Malware on 50,000 Networks, New Snowden Papers Show

The NSA has successfully compromised at least 50,000 networks using malware controlled by a 1,000-strong team of hackers, a presentation leaked from the Snowden cache has revealed.

It s another of the many statistics to emerge from Snowden s hard drive that is single-handedly transforming the world s understanding not only of US cyber-operations but what a

well-resourced state can achieve if it wants to.

The presentation seen by Dutch news source NRC Handelsblad mentions that as of 2012 the NSA s Tailored Access Operations (TAO) department had compromised 50,000 computer networks as part of a larger Computer Network Exploitation (CNE) operation active for up to 15 years.

We have to be careful about the nomenclature here; 50,000 networks is in the NSA s eyes equivalent to 50,000 separate locations so the actual number of PCs, servers and possibly routers controlled by this network is almost certainly much greater than 50,000 individual computers.

As NRC Handelsblad notes, an example of the type of hacking projects the TAO campaigns might resemble would be the infamous attacks on Belgian national telco Belgacom by Britain s NSA ally GCHQ, first publicised in September by German magazine Spiegel Online.

In that attack, the malware was installed by luring Belgacom employees to bogus LinkedIn and Slashdot pages using a system called Quantum Insert, in effect they were phished using a tactic straight out of the criminal handbook.

Another way of viewing the TAO malware would be to see it as part of the 231 cyber-operations written up in August by the Washington Post from separate Snowden files as having been carried out in 2011 alone, all part of the well-financed GENIE program. That report was also the first to discover that the NSA had been using malware but it is only now that details such as targeting and design are starting to become clearer.

The problem is that the accounts of what the NSA has been up to and for how long are still fragmentary. It is known that 50,000 networks in 30 countries have been compromised, as have 20 access points for international cable trunks, but that barely scratches the surface.

With news emerging almost every week of a new NSA attack on fundamental parts of international digital infrastructure almost all as far as we can tell highly successful   it is now safer to assume that the NSA can unlock what it wants more or less at will.

Yahoo Won t Let You Forward Your Emails to Another Service   But Why?

Yahoo has really been in the firing line in the past few weeks.

First came the news that the company had confirmed a data breach of half a billion records.

The age of the breach was as worrying as its size: the data was stolen back in 2014, but Yahoo only reported it recently.

The late publication of the report was not, apparently, out of any attempt to cover it up or to delay the news deliberately, but because the company only figured out something had gone wrong in August 2016.

That news was followed by claims that Marissa Mayer, Yahoo s CEO, had previously put the kibosh on a policy requiring passwords to be reset in the event of a breach, apparently because password resets, no matter how desirable they might be in an emergency, are annoying to users.

(Mayer, you may remember, famously welcomed Apple s iPhone fingerprint scanner by admitting she didn t lock her phone, admitting that she can t do this passcode thing, like, 15 times a day.)

Although adopting a mandatory password reset policy doesn t prevent breaches, and is always a last resort, it didn t reflect very well on Yahoo s security attitude to hear that it apparently decided to put ongoing user convenience ahead of security, even after a catastrophe.

Next came allegations that Yahoo may have searched its email database for an unknown set of keywords at the official request of US authorities.

Actually, as we wrote at the time, the official request was more of a classified demand, which is not at all the same thing.

Nevertheless, Yahoo s competitors wasted no time stating not only that they d never received such a demand, but also that they d have fought it publicly if ever they had received one.

The latest bad news for Yahoo surrounds the fact that its mail forwarding service has recently been suspended, at least for anyone who isn t already using it.

Mail forwarding is pretty much what it says: email received by one server is automatically redirected to another, just as you might forward your PO Box in one town to a new box in another town if you moved house.

One popular use for mail forwarding is as a temporary measure to help you migrate from one email service to another, so that you don t have to keep logging on to two different websites until you ve told everyone your new email address.

In short, forwarding mail from service X to service Y often means that X pays, but Y benefits.

That s led to suggestions that Yahoo has done this deliberately as a sort of lock-in , in the hope of discouraging users from leaving the service following the recent negative news stories.

We ll give Yahoo the benefit of the doubt and assume that security is the cause.

Mail forwarding is a risky feature, because a crook who manages to turn it on unlawfully can effectively take over your account in a way that isn t as obvious as changing your password.

Also, once a crook has forwarded your email, even if he does change your password to keep you out, he s able to read it without logging back into your account.

This means he ll leave a slightly less damaging (or at least a more convoluted) audit trail if anyone ever decides to investigate.

So, we re prepared to assume that Yahoo s new mail forwarding system has been temporarily suspended out of what the marketing folks like to call an abundance of caution, while the company conducts a security review on it.

We re assuming this isn t a commercial trick aimed at discouraging dissatisfied passengers from getting off the train at the next station.

What do you think?

Has Yahoo done this to improve security or to control commercial damage?

Facebook Is Leaking Valuable Younger Users

Facebook has been struggling to bring in younger users for several years now and it looks like the problem is getting worse.

According to Piper Jaffray Companies, a recent survey of 10,000 U.S. teenagers showed that 52% used Facebook at least once a month this fall, compared to 60% who used it monthly in the spring.

"Factoring out shifts in the population surveyed, core Facebook usage likely declined by three basis points, which indicates Facebook is gradually becoming less relevant versus Instagram and Snapchat," Piper Jaffray analyst Gene Munster wrote in a research note to investors.

The same survey, however, showed that teen use of Facebook-owned Instagram has gone from 70% to 74% in the same time frame - and rose from 75% to 80% for rival Snapchat.

When asked what their favorite social network was this fall, 35% said Snapchat; 24% said Instagram; and 13% said Twitter and Facebook (which tied for third place).

While older users - say anywhere from 35 to 65 years old - have shown to be loyal Facebook users, the site isn’t pulling in enough users 24 and younger to offset losses as older users die off.

"Well, think about it," said Zeus Kerravala, an analyst with ZK Research. "If Facebook just lost 8% of all teens, that’s millions of users.... Over time, they need to keep the funnel of users coming in on the younger side. I think it creates a huge

issue down the road. It’s not likely they can add users that are of older generations. They probably have all they will get from anyone 30 and older."

Facebook certainly has been working to draw in younger users.

In April, the company beefed up Facebook Live, which enables users to stream their live videos - and better take on social rival YouTube.

And in August, Facebook unveiled its Lifestage stand-alone app. Designed for iOS devices, the app enables teen users to share videos with other people in their schools.

Lifestage was born as a rival to Snapchat and basically a video version of an early stage Facebook.

That wasn’t the first time Facebook went after Snapchat’s valuable younger users.

In March, the company bought face-swapping app Masquerade or MSQRD. The app enables users to dress up their photos and selfies with an Iron Man helmet or a panda outfit.

Facebook hoped that by being able to add special effects to their pics, teens and young adults would be pulled onto Facebook - or at least one of the apps. But so far, at least, those efforts don’t appear to be panning out.

Patrick Moorhead, an analyst with Moor Insights & Strategies, said the issue may not matter as much as some might think.

"I do not see it as a problem [for Facebook] as long as those younger users are going to Instagram," he said. "Facebook, the company, needs to do what it has been doing, which is to invest in the next big teen thing. I believe as those teens get older, go to college and have a family, they will come back."

According to Moorhead, as people get older, they’ll give up their Instagram and Snapchat accounts and move to Facebook, no longer bothered that they’d be joining a social network where they’ll friend their parents and grandparents.

Kerravala, however, isn’t so sure that will really happen.

"People have either thought, ’Hey, I want to use Facebook’ and are using it - or they think Facebook is stupid and won’t ever use it," he said. "Facebook needs to stop trying to chase what’s already there and build something unique that teens don’t already have."

The EU s Latest Idea To Secure The Internet of Things? Sticky Labels

The EU has floated a new idea to boost the security of Internet of Things (IoT) products get manufacturers to stick labels on them telling buyers how secure they are.

It sounds simple enough. Products such as fridges, washing machines and ovens are already sold in the EU with mandatory energy efficiency ratings, so why not something similar for security?

In comments made at a weekend press conference, EU deputy commissioner for digital economy and society, Thibault Kleiner, spelled out some of the organization s worries about the state of IoT.

Ever greater numbers of products were being sold with an IoT connectivity as a standard feature, he said.

That s really a problem in the Internet of Things. It s not enough to just look at one component. You need to look at the network, the cloud. You need a governance framework to get certification.

The EU is also worried about data privacy as IoT devices gather information of the sort that could put consumers at risk from data breaches or snooping.

It s not about data as something you monetize, it s about dignity, something that s personal to an individual.

Despite there being at least five billion devices in service with IoT capability Gartner reckons that this is expanding by 5.5 million new devices every day security standards are only just emerging. Meanwhile, default security is often weak.

A warning of the potential for trouble came with the recent record-breaking DDoS attack on cybersecurity blogger Brian Krebs. The Mirai botnet that generated this huge wave of traffic came from an army of poorly-secured network cameras, digital video recorders (DVRs), routers and printers.

The Commission believes that labels guaranteeing adherence to basic security standards would encourage manufacturers to work together more closely in the spirit of common interest.

The EU is in the process of introducing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a major privacy overhaul that all large firms will have to comply with, including firms that want to use and build IoT devices.

However, getting to a situation where products are sold with labels that promise an agreed level of security seems some way off.

One hurdle is simply the diversity of products that are IoT-enabled, including motor cars, TVs, smart watches, home thermostats, smart meters, lighting systems, and home security. The IoT is suddenly everything and that will slow down the creation of common privacy and security standards.

The EU is doing its best to speed up development, investing 192 million in IoT research as part of its Horizon 2020 programme.

Unfortunately, IoT devices need better security now, not years

from now when the EU has agreed what the labels should look like and mean.

What consumers and businesses will think about having another label to peel off shiny new IoT products when pulling them out of the box remains an unknown.

Will they have faith in them? Or will they end up feeling disappointed should securing IoT devices from real-world threats turn out to be more complex than the label suggests?

HP’s New PCs Raise The Spectre of Competition

Putting a premium on premium, HP has overhauled its flagship Envy and Spectre devices just in time for the US holiday season.

The HP Spectre x360 was already an aesthetically pleasing convertible PC - i.e., it can be used as a tablet or a notebook - but now it’s even thinner and lighter for stylish on-the-go productivity.

The old model weighed 1.45kg. The new one is 11% lighter and the 13.3-inch display is now more or less border free. Yet, thanks to new Intel processors and a new battery pack, it should deliver 15 hours’ use between charges. HP claims that you will be able to recharge it again to 90% within 90 minutes.

The final premium touch is four integrated Bang & Olufsen-tuned speakers.

After ages in the doldrums, PC sales are beginning to pick up, particularly in the US, a region where HP is the most popular computer brand (29.9% market share), according to the latest IDC data.

"Industry efforts to update products to leverage new processors and operating systems, to deliver a better computing experience encompassing more mobile, secure, and faster systems, and to accelerate PC replacements have been critical," said Loren Loverde, IDC vice president, Worldwide PC Trackers & Forecasting.

And much of the updating HP is doing with its premium range is around boosting performance and speed.

For those that don’t need a convertible, the new HP Envy laptop now offers 14 hours’ battery life and the same fast charging tech found in the Spectre. Its 13.3-inch display for $200 less ($849.99 verses $1,049.99) can also be specified as full HD, Quad HD or full UHD and like the Spectre, the screen runs edge-to-edge.

As for performance, there are latest gen core 5 and Core 7 Intel processors available, space for 16GB of RAM and for a 1TB solid state hard drive. It gets two rather than four speakers but they are also of the Bang & Olufsen-tuned variety.

The final PC to get a makeover is the HP Envy AIO 27. It will

cost from $1,299.99 but wil boast a thinner 27-inch QHD display designed to reflect how consumers really use computers at home. It has a low blue light mode so that after an evening's binge watching, owners' eyes shouldn't be so sore that they can't sleep. And for the same reason the PC's base includes a four-speaker Bang & Olufsen-tuned soundbar.

"We are strengthening our leadership in premium with our redesigned PC portfolio to deliver big power in thin and light designs to be even more portable and revolutionize our all-in-one to bring amazing sound into the home," said Kevin Frost, VP and general manager, consumer personal systems, HP Inc.

Microsoft's Ship Target for Windows 10 'Redstone 2' is March, 2017

For a while now, a number of us Microsoft watchers have been referring to the next feature update to Windows 10 as a "Spring 2017" deliverable.

It seems it'll be on the early side of Spring if Microsoft hits its own internal ship target for Windows 10 "Redstone 2."

Earlier this week, Microsoft officials posted some documentation that made reference to a version of Windows 10 as "1703," which was unearthed by "The Walking Cat" and Tero Alhonen on Twitter.

Using Microsoft's current naming convention for Windows 10 releases, that implies the coming Redstone 2 build will be a March 2017 deliverable.

I asked some of my contacts and they confirmed that March 2017 is, indeed, the current ship target for Windows 10 Redstone 2. (I asked Microsoft officials for comment, and unsurprisingly, they had nothing to say on the matter.)

Remember that ship/RTM (release to mainstream) targets don't necessarily equal general availability. The Windows 10 Anniversary Update, a k a 1607, did hit RTM in July, as that build number indicates, but technically wasn't generally available until August 2.

So far, the Insider test builds of Redstone 2 haven't revealed any of what hopefully will be some of the more major features coming in the next Windows 10 release. The test builds so far have been mostly vehicles for rather minor feature tweaks.

Microsoft is expected to discuss more regarding features and plans for Redstone 2 at its October 26 Windows 10/hardware event in New York City. We've heard there could be talk of the addition of the Windows Holographic shell to Windows 10 Redstone 2 there.

For those wondering whether a 1703 ship target implies anything about dates for Microsoft's Build 2017 event, I don't believe so. Microsoft doesn't need to use its annual developer show to launch a new release, as developers already are working with early versions of new Windows 10 releases on a regular basis.

In other Windows news from this week, Microsoft started rolling out the Anniversary Update/1607 release of Windows 10 to its Surface Hub devices yesterday, October 13. I didn't realize until yesterday's blog post that Microsoft calls the version of Windows 10 inside the Surface Hub "Windows 10 Team Edition."

The Anniversary Update for Surface Hub includes simultaneous pen/touch support; inking support; Flash support for Edge; preloaded PowerBI, OneDrive and Photos apps and more.

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